

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 05197 01 OF 02 122209Z

70

ACTION EUR-25

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SAJ-01 AEC-11 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-03 INT-08 L-03 NSC-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1469

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 5197

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EEC, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIUM FOREIGN MINISTER'S BUDGET SPEECH ON FOREIGN
POLICY

REF: BRUSSELS 5054

1. SUMMARY: BELGIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VAN ELSANDE

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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 05197 01 OF 02 122209Z

GAVE JAMOR FOREIGN POLICH SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT ON JULY 9, 1974,

IN CONNECTION WITH PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION OF HIS MINISTRY'S BUDGET FOR 1975. VAN ELSLANDE'S COMMENTS ESSENTIALLY REPEATED THEMES PRESENTED BY PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS IN HIS JULY 5 PRESS CONFERENCE (REFTEL). BEIGUM WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ALL EFFORTS FOR GREATER EUROPEAN UNITY AND FOR INCREASED AUTHORITY FOR EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME BELGIUM BELIEVES EUROPE HAS WORLD ROLE TO PLAY AND THAT A UNIFIED EUROPE IS THE WAY IN WHICH IT COULD EXERCISE THIS ROLE. THIS INCLUDES A UNIFIED APPROACH ON THE ENERGY PROBLEM WHERE HOPEFULLY THE EC INCLUDING FRANCE WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIONS ALREADY UNDERWAY. VAN ELSLANDE ALSO REITERATED BELGIUM'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. (THIS TELEGRAM SUMMARIZES VAN ELSLANDE'S COMMENTS ON ECONOMIC COORDINATION, ENERGY, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN THE EC, AND FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. OTHER SUBJECTS BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY. COPIES OF FULL TEXT BEING POUCHED TO EUR/WE EUR/RPE, EUR/RPM, AND USEC.) END SUMMARY.

2. VAN ELSLANDE OPENED HIS REMARKS BY REFERRING TO PREVIOUS PESSIMISTIC COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF EUROPE. EARLY THIS YEAR HE SAID TO THE PRESS THAT IT WAS NOT CLEAR THAT EUROPEAN UNIFICATION WAS IRREVERSIBLE, THAT IT CORRESPONDED FULLY TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL MEMBER STATES, AND THAT HE HAD BEEN DISTURBED BY THE ATTITUDE OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS AND OF PUBLIC APATHY. TODAY, HE SAID, FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, "IT COULD NOT BE SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED BUT MY ANALYSIS IS NOT AS SOMBER."

3. INSTITUTIONAL REFORM: VAN ELSLANDE ECHOED PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS' RECENT CALL (REFTEL) FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE COMMUNITY'S EXECUTIVE. HE CLAIMED THAT THE MAJORITY OF EC MEMBERS NOW AGREE THAT THE SHORTCOMING OF PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS "RESULT IN A PARALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN EXECUTIVE" AND MUST BE REFORMED ALONG THE LINES THE BELGIANS ARE PROPOSING.

4. VAN ELSLANDE CALLED FOR THE CREATION OF A SINGLE COUNCIL ("UN CONSEIL UNIQUE") WHICH WOULD HAVE POLITICAL AUTHORITY

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 05197 01 OF 02 122209Z

TO DEAL WITH COMMUNITY PROBLEMS. CREATION OF NEW, HIGHEST LEVEL COUNCIL WOULD AUGMENT AUTHORITY AND IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION WHICH WOULD THEN BECOME A TRUE EUROPEAN INSTITUTION RATHER THAN THE ADMINISTRATIVE TOOL OF VARIOUS MINISTERS.

5. IN A FURTHER EXPOSITION OF HIS VIEWS, VAN ELSLANDE REFERS TO THE "REINFORCEMENT" OF THE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL, WHICH WOULD ALSO INCREASE THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE

COUNCIL. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS THE IMPORTANCE OF A PRESIDENT WHO WOULD CONTROL THE RANGE AND PACE OF INTRA-COMMUNITY DELIBERATIONS.

6. COMMENT: VAN ELSLANDE'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE "CONSEIL UNIQUE" ARE IN ONE RESPECT VAGUE: AT ONE POINT HE IMPLIES THAT A NEW "SUPREM" BODY WILL BE CREATED, ELSEWHERE IN HIS SPEECH HE REFERS TO A REINFORCEMENT OF THE COUNCIL.

7. ECONOMIC POLICIES: VAN ELSLANDE ALSO REPEATED TINDEMANS' CALL FOR GREATER COORDINATION OF ECONOMIC AND MONETARY POLICIES WITHIN THE EC. WHILE INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IS IMPORTANT, THE TRUE OBJECTIVE IS PROGRESS IN DEALING WITH REAL PROBLEMS. HE STATED THAT "DESPITE THE PERSISTENT DIFFICULTIES, THERE IS AN EXISTING DESIRE TO DEAL WITH THE TWO MOST ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY INTEGRATION: THE FLIGHT AGAINST INFLATION AND THE ENERGY WAR".

8. AS DID TINDEMANS, VAN ELSLANDE RECOGNIZED THAT CERTAIN COUNTRIES HAVE SPECIAL PROBLEMS BUT NEVERTHELESS INSISTED "THAT WITHOUT CONCERTED EFFORTS THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ECONOMIES OF THE VARIOUS MEMBER STATES WILL ONLY INCREASE". THEREFORE IT IS VITAL THAT NO COUNTRY TAKE MEASURES WHICH VIOLATE COMMUNITY RULES. THIS WILL REQUIRE DISCIPLINE AND SOME SACRIFICES, BUT "ALL OF THE GOVERNMENTS APPEAR TO US SENSITIVE TO THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM" AND AWAIT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT AND THE GERMAN FEDERAL CHANCELLOR. BELGIUM WILL SUPPORT THEM."

9. VAN ELSLANDE EXPANDED SOMEWHAT ON TINDEMANS' COMMENTS ON ENERGY, PARTICULARLY IN RESPECT TO THE ROLE OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BRUSSE 05197 01 OF 02 122209Z

FRENCH. HE REFERRED TO THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS WHICH WILL BE SOON REVIEWED BY THE EC. HE THEN ADDED THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY ENERGY POLICY ARE CONCERNED WITH THE SAME THEMES RAISED AT THE WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE, AND STATED THAT BELGIUM HOPED THAT AN UNDERSTANDING COULD BE REACHED WITH FRANCE WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE "WORK WHICH HAS FOLLOWED THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE" (I.E., THE ENERGY COORDINATION GROUP).

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 05197 02 OF 02 122157Z

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BRUSSELS 5197

10. FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: LONGEST PART OF VAN
ELSLANDE'S SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF BELGIAN
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. HE DESCRIBED EXISTING
CONCENTRATION ON ISOLATED PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY CONCERNED
WITH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. HE MENTIONED
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 05197 02 OF 02 122157Z

RECENT CHANGES IN THE WORLD SITUATION WHICH HAS DIVIDED THE WORLD'S POOR COUNTRIES INTO TWO CATEGORIES: THOSE BENEFITTING FROM THE CHANGES IN RESPECT TO COMMODITY PRICES AND THOSE THRUST EVEN DEEPER INTO POVERTY. HE PROMISED THE PARLIAMENT A REFORMED AID PROGRAM WHICH WOULD PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON INTEGRATED PROGRAMS, FEASIBILITY STUDIES, MULTI-YEAR PLANNING, AND CONCENTRATION ON "THE REAL NEEDS OF THE LDC'S". HE ALSO PROMISED CONTINUED BELGIAN SUPPORT TO MULTILATERAL PROGRAMS WHICH NOW RECEIVE ONE-QUARTER OF BELGIUM'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. FINALLY HE SAID THAT "IT WAS ONLY BY THE EXTENSION AND THE LIBERALIZATION OF WORLD TRADE AND BY THE IMPROVEMENT OF WORLD PRACTICES IN COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC THAT THE LEVEL OF LIFE AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION CAN BE IMPROVED", AND PROMISED CONTINUED BELGIAN SUPPORT FOR SUCH INITIATIVES AND FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

11. COMMENT: VAN ELSLANDE'S SPEECH, FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS OF TINDEMANS' PRESS CONFERENCE AND RECENT VISIT TO PARIS, OUTLINES A VIGOROUS INTERNATIONAL ROLE FOR THE TINDEMANS' GOVERNMENT. WHILE THE PROGRAM CONTAINS NO STRIKING INNOVATIONS OR PROPOSALS, IT IS ACTIVIST, KEYED TO A REASONABLE PERCEPTION OF BELGIUM'S WEIGHT IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES, AND REFLECTS THE TRADITIONAL BELGIAN SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT AND MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY. MORE SIGNIFICANT INTERNALLY THAN EXTERNALLY, IT DOES OFFER A POLICY PACKAGE FOR THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT. WE MAY CONTINUE TO EXPECT PUBLIC BELGIAN EFFORTS TO SPUR THE MAJOR POWERS TO ACTION AS TINDEMANS AND VAN ELSLANDE ATTEMPT TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN EUROPE AND IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (FOR BOTH ARE CLEARLY SEEN AS VITAL TO BELGIAN INTERESTS). FIRESTONE

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